

Pr: Heber 1790

A
D E F E N C E
OF THE
D O C T R I N E S,
ESTABLISHMENT, AND CONDUCT,
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND,
FROM THE
C H A R G E S
OF
THE REV. JOSEPH BERINGTON,
AND
THE REV. JOHN MILNER.

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O X F O R D,
PRINTED FOR D. PRINCE AND J. COOKE;
SOLD BY G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON, PATER-NOSTER ROW,
LONDON. MDCCXC.
[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

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P R E F A C E.

TH E writers in defence of the Church of Rome have renewed the charge against the Protestants of misrepresentation of their tenets. A person under the signature of Candidus published thirty seven propositions in the * Gentleman's Magazine, as the real principles held by the English Catholics. Mr. Milner has undertaken in a Sermon upon the King's Recovery to vindicate their Church from the charges of uncharitableness, sedition, and perjury. And Mr. Berington claims as a matter of right, that Catholics with the Dissenters should be admitted to places of honour and trust. As the propositions of Candidus appeared to me to be artful palliations of the popish doctrines, and several of them considerably different from the sentiments of foreign Catholics, and the deci-

* For 1787. pp. 25. 107. 205.

sions of their ancient Popes; I published some Remarks upon each, † granting, or denying them to be conformable to the scriptures. This roused the indignation of Mr. Berington, who called upon me ‡ to unmask, and pledged himself, if I would prove myself a person of some worth, to shew all my Remarks, except one, to be visibly absurd. I have now fulfilled one of his conditions, and call upon him, in my turn, to declare in what respect I am unworthy of his notice, or to fulfil his engagement. It is remarkable, that neither Mr. Milner, nor Mr. Berington, in their late publications refer to the propositions of Candidus, as a summary of their faith; though we might well expect a clear, full, and consistent account of their tenets from themselves, when we are accused of ignorance and misrepresentation. Above all they should inform us, whether the faith of the members of the Church of Rome, in doctrine and morality, be the same in all ages, and all kingdoms. And if they acknowledge that the English Ca-

† For 1788. pp. 412. 484. 583.

‡ Ibid. p. 696.

tholics differ from foreigners in some material points, or assert that they have forsaken some ancient errors, they should calmly set forth the proofs of their reformation, and shew what security we have, that they will not hereafter relapse through the influence of bad example, or the command of their spiritual rulers. It must be granted, that persons of a different age may see and renounce the mistakes of their forefathers ; and that individuals, or even nations, may be free from some absurdities, which are charged upon others of the same communion. The question then is, What are the real Principles of the Roman Catholics in England ; and what influence their dependence upon the Pope would probably have upon their allegiance, justice, and humanity, if they were admitted to all the privileges of other citizens, and entrusted with equal power ? As I have been accused by Mr. Berington of vanity, envy, and absurdity ; to shew that I am not entirely ignorant of the laws of disputation, I shall in the following pages, first mention the good qualities and faults, which ought in my opinion to be culti-

vated or avoided by controversial writers ; then examine some of the doctrines of the Church of Rome, which tend to make the Papists dangerous or oppressive ; defend the Protestants from the charges and insinuations of Mr. Milner ; make some cursory remarks upon the performances of him and Mr. Berington ; and conclude with a comparison between the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholics, and Protestants of the Church of England.

A
D E F E N C E
OF THE
D O C T R I N E S, &c.

CHAPTER I.

ESSENTIAL QUALITIES TO BE CULTIVATED
IN IMPORTANT CONTROVERSIES.

I. **A** DESIRE of finding the truth. This will keep men from defending their opinions by false arguments, and prevent them from mixing foreign matter, which they know conduces nothing to the merits of the question. In religious controversies it will likewise have a strong tendency to make them pay due reverence to the Word of God.

II. Judgment

II. Judgment in giving its proper weight to every argument, and seeing the connection between the parts of a subject.

III. Candour to ascribe every action to its proper motive, to allow the good qualities which appear in our adversaries, and to admit the force of such arguments as are founded in truth.

IV. Impartiality, which will make us grant that to be commendable in others, which we value in ourselves ; and that to disgrace our own party, which we blame in our antagonists.

Smoothness of style, elegance of language, and novelty of argument, are not here reckoned. The two former, though desirable ornaments, are not necessary qualifications ; and though this age be captivated with novelty ; yet truth alone is to be sought, and valued according to its importance, whether the arguments which support it be new or old.

C H A P. II.

FAULTS IN CONTROVERSIAL WRITERS.

I. **T**O represent what has been seldom practised, as equally blameable with that which has been frequent, and to confound small degrees of any fault with great.

II. To grant an action to be wrong in general, and to palliate every particular instance.

III. Not to distinguish between things universally, generally, or seldom true; or to assume one for the other.

IV. To endeavour in a serious subject to excite ridicule by personal reflections upon an adversary; especially when those reflections are conjectural and false.

V. To use assertions without arguments in things neither proved in a former chapter, nor self-evident, and which they know to be denied by their adversaries.

VI. To contradict their own principles, or those of their party, without explaining the reason of their limitations or exceptions.

C H A P. III.

OF THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.

IT is well known, and therefore needs no proof, that the Pope has claimed not only the rank of the first Bishop in the Christian Church, but the title of the Vicar of Christ, supreme Head over all other Bishops, and Judge of Ecclesiastical Controversies, with a supposed Plenitude of Apostolical Power. He has also exercised the privilege of excommunicating and deposing kings for resistance to his will, laying their dominions under an interdict, and freeing their subjects from all bonds of allegiance. Though these extravagant claims frequently met with different degrees of resistance; yet as many of them are dangerous to the rights of princes, and have formerly occasioned much mischief in the world, it is necessary to enquire, what degree of power Catholics now ascribe to the Pope, and *what Security* the Papists ^a*can give to a Protestant Government*, if the Pope should resolve, that they are not bound by their allegiance. In answer to these questions Mr. Milner admits the Pope to be ^b*the Head of the Episcopal Order, and his See to be the Centre of Ca-*

^a Page 13. line 8.^b P. 13. l. 14.

tholic Union. If by Head he only means Primate in an Assembly or general Council of Bishops without any privilege above the rest, his opinion would be of no dangerous consequence, if erroneous; and consequently need not be disputed. But if by Head and Centre of Union, they suppose him invested with supremacy over the whole Church, and a coercive power to enforce his lawful commands, it becomes necessary for the champions of Popery to shew what power they do not ascribe to the Pope, and to prove his title to the rights, which he is admitted to have by the church of Rome. Mr. Milner here denies, that they consider the Pope as an absolute Sovereign either in Faith or Morality, and desires his opponents, whom he calls '*profound Theologians*, to learn for the first time, that they will *neither submit to his mandates, when they are in opposition to moral rectitude, nor bow to his particular opinions, when contrary to the acknowledged faith of the Church.* It were to be wished, that controversial writers were more sparing of contemptuous expressions. *Profound theologians*, and ^d*superficial controversialists* impress the minds of bigots with a mean opinion of all our writers; but will have no effect upon the judicious and impartial. But granting that Mr. Milner with all his hearers and friends have fixed upon this for the rule of their obedience, the Pope's supremacy may still

^c P. 13. l. 15.

^d P. 7. l. 13.

do much mischief amongst the Catholic subjects of an heretical Prince. The Pope being acknowledged Head of the Church, has generally, if not universally, evaded any limitation of his power proposed in a council. His right of excommunication, interdiction, and deposition has not been condemned by any decree of their Church. And whenever he has encroached on the civil power, the opposition of their prelates was languid; and the dread of the Pope was so great upon their minds, that he mostly reaped some benefit from his extravagant pretensions. His power was always indeed more circumscribed in England than in other kingdoms; and therefore an English Papist may be more loyal to his Prince, and less obedient to the Pope, than one of another nation. But still their allegiance would depend much upon their opinion of the lawfulness of the Pope's commands, if he should again prove tyrannical, or turbulent: and every one may not be a sufficient judge, when the Pope's mandates contradict the decrees of the Church, or the doctrines of the Gospel, which he is not allowed to read.

Mr. Berington before he defines and limits the Pope's supremacy, endeavours to persuade his readers, that the reformers have expressed a dread of his power, which they did not feel. But the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, with the manner in which he has formerly exerted his power, is a ground of real alarm. If we
read

read history impartially, we must see, that the dread, which the first reformers entertained of the Church of Rome, was not a fiction ; since that is full of the persecutions, which the Popes excited against all whom they stiled Heretics, and the excommunications and interdicts, which they frequently published against every King that opposed their will. The reformers appealed to the Scriptures to prove, that the Popes had in several articles corrupted the Christian Faith. The champions of the Church of Rome should therefore defend their doctrines, and not merely consider the question in a political view, or falsely accuse the protestants of aggravating the conduct of that Church, which when in power endeavoured to prevent reformation by fire and the sword.

The reformers are next accused of bringing *‘ the person and power of the Pope before the people, and drawing a horrible imagery with the disproportion of a monster from the Book of Revelations.* To describe the power and conduct of the Head of their Church is certainly the fittest method to determine the merits of their cause, when the Papists ascribe so much dignity to their Popes and Councils. And to appeal to the Book of the Revelation, which is of Divine Authority, can be no fault, provided we examine the question coolly and impartially, and do not enthusiastically strain any text beyond the fair

meaning. All prophecies are obscure in their minuter circumstances, and therefore liable to be mistaken, when too nicely examined. The person described in the Revelation under the character of ^f a beast with seven heads and ten horns, and of ^g a woman sitting upon such a beast arrayed in purple and scarlet, is represented as ^h opening his mouth in blasphemy against God, and making for some time successful war against the saints, as having power over all kindreds, tongues, and nations, and being worshipped by all, whose names are not written in the book of life. And the ⁱ woman is said to be drunken with the blood of the saints. That this prophecy was delivered by an inspired writer our adversaries cannot deny. Of its resemblance to the Church of Rome let the impartial judge.

After this violent accusation of the Reformers, that they have systematically accused the Church of Rome contrary to their own knowledge, he pays a compliment to himself, that he *never felt the least disposition to defend his religion by address, or any disguise of its most suspicious tenets.* His zeal may blind his own eyes. For in the very next sentence he palliates the usurpations of the Pope by asserting, that when *his power was greatest in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, he was useful to Christendom as he was powerful, and powerful as he was re-*

^f Ch. xiii. v. 1.

^g xvii. 2.

^h xiii. 6, 7, 8.

ⁱ xvii. 6.

^k P. 25. l. 21.

^l P. 25. l. 25.

ligious.

ligious. Mr. Berington, whatever may be his disposition, certainly uses no little address in this representation of the power of the Pope. He dwells upon the good that resulted from his interference, and slides over the evils that arose from his tyranny; gently observing that ^m *all power is subject to abuse*, and asserting, at the same time that he admits it to have been abused, that ⁿ *it's salutary effects far preponderated*. That the Popes sometimes promoted peace between princes, and that they were well employed, and deserved praise, when they did it upon just conditions, we readily grant. But before they can be judged useful to Christendom, and vindicated on this account, we must consider with what motive they assumed this power, what commission they had for the exercise of this authority, and whether the mischiefs they occasioned did not far exceed the benefit of their good actions. If we apply to any history tolerably impartial, we may see, that the Popes had their own interest chiefly in view; and that they frequently favoured particular persons, as that directed, without much regard to truth or justice. Mr. Berington roundly asserts, in the prosecution of this argument, some propositions which are not generally true. The Pope was not ^o *useful as he was powerful*; since he frequently abused his power by excommu-

^m P. 27. l. 4.ⁿ Ib. l. 6.^o P. 25. l. 27.

nications,

nications, interdicts, and persecutions. ^p *A profligate Pope* did not always lose his *influence* by his turbulence or wickedness. The vulgar and ignorant are guided more by opinion than truth. The profligacy of a Pope might not reach their ears, except in very flagrant cases. They were bigotted to his person and character; and would be unwilling to believe any ill of him, who was styled his Holiness. The wicked in every age, which are commonly numerous, are ready to be the instruments of the tyranny of their superiors. And the punishments, which profligate Popes liberally inflicted upon their enemies, tended to silence all opposition; even from those, who inwardly disapproved of their proceedings. Accordingly we find that the opposition against the Pope has mostly been languid, and however unjust was his cause, that he has commonly made peace upon favourable conditions. Even at this day, the Popes of the eleventh and twelfth centuries can meet with an advocate in that Catholic, who glories in the Revolution, and owns that their power has been sometimes abused. Their power was not delegated by the common consent of princes; though they might apply to it for advantage, or submit to it through fear. And though ^q *Providence does not commit the world to the caprice of human passions*; yet we cannot argue, that every usurpation is appointed

^p P. 25. l. 28.

^q P. 27. l. 12.

by God; since he can force even the wicked to complete his designs, whilst they think they are pursuing their temporal interest. Upon the whole, the Popes of the eleventh and twelfth^r centuries, and we may add those that followed till after the Reformation, uniformly concurred to increase their power. Some pursued this end by milder methods than others, and some had likewise more regard to virtue. They chiefly consulted their own interest. And though they did some good; yet they successfully established such arrogant claims, exercised such cruelty, and introduced such corrupt doctrines into Christianity; that without any desire of imitating their intolerant spirit, we think their followers unfit to be trusted with power, whilst the Pope's supremacy however qualified is an article of their faith; lest the same scenes should be renewed at a favourable opportunity. For it is observable, that scarce any of the doctrines of Popery, which are now said to have been owing to the excesses of particular Popes, have ever been solemnly disclaimed by the act of their rulers; and that even those, who want to be called 'English Catholics, and not Papists, pride themselves on the unity of their church, and the antiquity of their faith.

^s The influence of the Church of Rome was indeed less in this country than in many other

^r P. 19. l. 23.

^s P. 27. l. 17.

kingdoms. But it was sufficiently permanent to embarrass often the civil government, to make king John resign his crown, to carry much wealth out of the nation under various pretences, and to cause persecutions in several reigns, by which many Protestants lost their lives for their religion. That the power of the Pope was *'freely delegated* wants proof. That it was useful is only true to a small degree; whilst it was prejudicial to the dearest rights of men in divers respects. And that it was necessary, or appointed by the special Providence of God, is an assertion void of foundation. History then tells us, that the Pope took every opportunity of increasing his power; and chiefly made use of his usurpations to enrich himself, and punish his enemies.

After palliating the rise of these enormous claims, Mr. Berington proceeds to define, what is the essential and *"divine* right of the Roman Bishop. This he justly determines to be, what he had *"from the beginning*. He asserts that he had *a supremacy, or preeminence of jurisdiction, which was exercised by St. Peter, and his immediate successors, and which constituted him and them, the first pastors, or primates of the Christian Church*. As Mr. Berington is well acquainted with the objections of the Protestants to the Supremacy of the Roman Bishops, he

^t P. 29. l. 6.

^u P. 29. l. 20.

^w Ib. l. 21.

should

should have proved, that St. Peter ever claimed or exercised any superiority over the rest of the apostles, and that he was ever properly Bishop of Rome ; since upon any other supposition the Pope would have no more right to be called his successor, than any other ancient bishop. Mr. Berington has therefore neither shewn positively, upon what foundation the Pope claims his universal Supremacy over the Church of Christ, nor which of his numerous prerogatives was exercised from the beginning.

Mr. Berington next proceeds to limit the Pope's Supremacy by negatives. But he has before owned, that ** so little power was exercised at first, that it soon became impossible to define the acts of jurisdiction, and to say, this is from his Primacy, as established by Christ, and that from the new powers erected by the ministry.* Mr. Berington therefore does not sufficiently condemn the interdicts and depositions, by which the Popes formerly tyrannized over princes, nor the establishment of the Inquisition, that disgrace to human nature. For though he denies the Pope *† to have any temporal power, unless as a prince in his own territories ; or to have any concern with kings or their governments,* and asserts, that *‡ he can dispense with no engagements, dissolve no allegiance, and suspend no compacts ;* yet all these usurpations have

* P. 30. l. 14.

† P. 32. l. 14.

‡ Ib. l. 19.

been claimed and exercised by divers Popes ; and we may reasonably judge that their decrees and example would have great influence upon the minds of many Papists, if such claims should be revived at some favourable opportunity. They have never been expressly abolished by any solemn decree of their whole Church, and the first Potentate in Christendom is expected, before his coronation, to swear that he will protect and obey the See of Rome. The Popes in former ages did not establish their usurpations by their own temporal power ; but by the exertion of their supposed spiritual authority to promote temporal purposes. The present Pope, indeed, has disclaimed all such arts ; and the world is much enlightened, since the Reformation, in religious truths. But, as every thing human is liable to change, if any future Pope should interfere in temporal affairs, and enforce his decrees with excommunications, we may suppose that even in England many would be terrified into obedience by his threats, others would timidly stand neuter, and few would be so courageous as openly to resist the Head of their Church. Mr. Berington has granted in general, that some Popes have abused their power, but is careful not to determine particularly which of their irregular actions should be called excesses. From all this we may fairly conclude, that if ever Popery should again prevail, the extent of this Supremacy would be referred

referred to the decision of the Pope himself, or of a Council summoned by him, in which his Legates preside, and whose decrees are not valid without his confirmation. If Mr. Berington intended a satisfactory defence to candid and impartial persons, he should either have proved from scripture, that the Pope has a real Supremacy; or have shewn, that all the acts of his usurpation have been so publicly disclaimed, that we are under no probable danger of their being revived.

C H A P. IV.

OF THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE.

THE modern champions of the Church of Rome assert, that the infallibility of the Pope is no article of their faith. It is therefore a proper enquiry, what opinion they really entertain of the Pope's knowledge; since that must greatly contribute to the authority or influence of his decrees. Whether the notion of infallibility arises from the sanction of a council, or the opinion of the vulgar concerning Papal dignity, it would, when once established, have the same consequences upon their minds; though the latter might sooner be rectified in an enlightened age. The Papists may be allowed by their Church to judge of the Pope's infallibility according to their pleasure. But I imagine none of the Catholic writers will deny, that their Church is by every Papist believed to be guided by an infallible spirit. The decrees therefore of a Pope and Council are not to be disputed by any Catholic. And in the intervals between their general councils, the Pope is acknowledged the supreme judge of all spiritual controversies. When his decisions displease any particular persons, whose doctrines he has condemned, the appeal is made to a future Pope and Council, and seldom, or never, to the Scriptures;

tures ; as if the Papal authority were necessary to the confirmation of any article of faith. As it has not been decided by any Council that the Pope is fallible, the Papists are allowed to believe him infallible, or not, without censure. The question then is, which they do believe. The authority, which the Pope formerly assumed, and the ready submission that was paid to many arbitrary commands, would induce one to think, that the generality were once on the side of his infallibility. However he can now secure the obedience of all true Papists by the sanction of a Council. He is looked upon with reverence, except in flagrant instances of error and oppression. He is by many acknowledged to be infallible in his public capacity. And if the English Catholics are at present so far enlightened, that they can generally make a true distinction between his just and unjust decisions ; unless this spirit and understanding were universal through their Church, supposing the Pope to renew his censures against any future heretical Prince, we may doubt, whether the Catholics would be equally firm in their allegiance as his other subjects. Whilst they are allowed to think, as they please, of the Pope's infallibility, some would most probably judge, that his Holiness must be obeyed in all cases ; and the rest be more or less intimidated from resisting a person, whom they all respect as the Successor of St. Peter, and the Vicar of Christ.

CHAP.

C H A P. V.

OF THE CRUELTY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

THOUGH Mr. Milner admits ^a the frequency of persecution in Catholic States, and the institution of the tremendous Inquisition; yet he asserts, that *till the formal sentence of the Church, deciding the obligation of inflicting corporal punishment on dissenters from the faith, is produced, they are no more accountable for the blood spilt by Catholic princes and magistrates on the score of Religion, than Protestants are for the persecutions their ancestors have carried on against Catholics, and against each other.* If all the persecutions in the Church of Rome had been carried on by the Civil Power alone, Popery would still be more dreadful than our religion, in proportion to the superior number of victims, the length of time, in which such a spirit prevailed, and the cruelty of the punishments which were inflicted. It is not necessary to convict their Church of cruelty, that we should have a formal sentence of a Council declaring the necessity of punishing heretics with death. It is surely sufficient to prove their concurrence, that the governors of their Church have encouraged princes to root out heresy, that they have

^a P. 7. l. 18.

commended and rewarded with founding titles and fancied blessings such as were most cruel, that the Inquisition was established by a Pope, that crusades against heretics have been instigated by the same authority, that these barbarities have never been condemned by any sentence of the Pope or Council through so many centuries, and have been at last abolished by the Civil Power, upon whom the sole blame is unjustly laid; and that the Council of Constance confirmed this practice by condemning John Hufs, and delivering him up to the secular power in open violation of the emperor's safe conduct. When an article so notorious, important, and contrary to the mild spirit of our holy religion was in agitation so long, the Church had time to shew it's disapprobation. It thundered out anathemas against heretics, when it knew that princes put heretics to death. It's ecclesiastics apprehended and tried the criminals, and it's Popes established and promoted the Inquisition. Though we do not therefore acquit the princes, who have been guilty of cruelty in any religion or kingdom, nor excuse those Protestants, who have encouraged persecution; yet we must ascribe to the Church of Rome, as the primary cause, the barbarity that has been exercised in her communion.

But it is farther asserted that the ^b*charitable and tolerating spirit of the Church of Rome is*

^b P. 9. l. 13.

proved

proved in the very process of condemning heterodox opinions, since she declares that her power extends no farther than to censuring such opinions. The judges of the Inquisition, who are ecclesiastics, censure indeed those opinions, which they stile heterodox. At the same time they condemn the persons, who are convicted of holding such opinions; some to milder punishments, and some to be delivered as obstinate or relapsed heretics to the secular magistrate. They know that these will not be tried again by any Civil judge, but will be put to death the same day, in a more or less cruel manner, according to their profession of faith. If therefore they did not judge their crime worthy of death, they would sentence them to some milder punishment. And as they know that a cruel death will be the consequence of their censuring a man for holding opinions contrary to the Church of Rome, and delivering him to the Civil power, they must in all fair construction be directly instrumental in shedding the blood of heretics. And though Cardinal Pole and some others might oppose and render less extensive the persecutions of Queen Mary, it does not sufficiently confirm the idea of their general lenity. In this very instance the violent and cruel prevailed over the merciful; and perhaps the latter might be restrained in their benevolence, for fear of being suspected of heretical principles. Besides setting aside capital punishments, the cruelty of
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the Inquisition above all temporal courts may be proved from the secrecy of it's proceedings, the length of its imprisonments, and the barbarity of it's tortures. Some facts may have been concealed, and some exaggerated. But enough of it's cruelty has been proved to make it justly tremendous not only to Protestants, but to every Popish nation, where it has not gained a footing, and consequently imposed silence. It is now restrained by the Civil power; but was long cherished by the authority of the Popes.

Mr. Milner asserts further in proof of the tolerating spirit of his Church, that *she pronounces irregular and excludes from her ministry such of her pastors as are but remotely instrumental in shedding the blood of heretics; ^a and that the behaviour of St. Martin and St. Ambrose is constantly celebrated amongst the Catholics, and held up for imitation in refusing to hold communion with Ithacus, and certain other Ecclesiastics, who forgetting the lenity of their character, promoted the capital punishment of the Priscillian heretics.* The Inquisitors certainly promote the capital punishment of heretics; but are not for that reason declared irregular by the Church of Rome. And as many heretics have been condemned and put to death in the territories of the Pope, they must be executed by his consent and authority; and if this rule were esta-

^c P. 9. l. 17.

^d P. 10. l. 3.

blished

blished in their Church, he would deserve to be esteemed irregular, and to be excluded from the ministry.

The next argument to prove the inquisition to be a mere engine of state is, that ^c it has not prevailed equally in every Catholic country, and that it was not ordered to be established universally by the Council of Trent. The answer is obvious. Many Popes have endeavoured to extend the Inquisition; but their influence has not been equal in every kingdom. And if the members of the Council of Trent had been inclined to exercise universal severity, the season was unfavourable to such a project; since the power of the Pope was already shaken, and the dread of persecution would have united their adversaries, and might have been productive of retaliation.

^c P. 10. l. 12.

C H A P. VI.

DEFENCE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
FROM THE CHARGE OF EQUAL CRUELTY.

AT the same time that Mr. Milner acquits the present generation of the charge of persecution, he enumerates many instances of a persecuting spirit formerly exercised by Protestants against the Catholics, and against each other; and demands that we admit the same excuses in behalf of the present members of their Church, which we plead in behalf of ourselves. If the circumstances were the same, his demand would be just. But it is very possible that in two societies, where the ancestors have each been guilty of unjustifiable acts in different degrees, the posterity of one may be much more capable of following the bad examples of their forefathers than the descendants of the other. He asserts that *'as severe laws have been enacted to suppress the antient religion as ever were framed to prevent new religions from starting up; that in consequence of these laws full as much blood has been shed by one party as by the other; and that protestants have persecuted one another even to death. The last in many instances we own, condemn, and lament; I shall*

' P. 8. l. 3.

therefore

therefore only examine the truth and accuracy of the two former accusations.

The laws against Popery in the time of Queen Elizabeth were undoubtedly intended to put it in the power of the executive part of the government to suppress at pleasure the exercise of the Popish religion. The penalties against the teachers may be called equally severe, though the death inflicted was much less barbarous; but to the people in general of that communion the treatment at the strictest was much more mild. We condemn unequivocally the punishment of persons purely for religion; but our penal laws against Papists were at first occasioned, in a great measure, by the necessity of self-defence, and have in general been suspended or relaxed, as the danger diminished. The Catholics were leagued together in principles, and many of them eager for the destruction of heretics for a considerable time after the reformation. There are undoubtedly numerous instances of cruelty and retaliation to be found amongst Protestants, especially during the heat of war, and when their minds were inflamed with recent injuries. But if all these were put together, they would fall vastly short of the blood that has been shed in crusades, massacres, and legal executions by the Church of Rome. It should moreover be observed that every Catholic, who was executed under Queen Elizabeth, as a Catholic, was not put to death purely for religion.

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She had been excommunicated by the Pope. Her legitimacy and title had been called in question by the same authority. The arms of England had been assumed by her cousin, *Queen Mary*, a Papist. And as the Catholics of those days had not declared against the Pope's infallibility, and often bowed to his commands without examining how far they were consistent with moral rectitude, she had great reason to suspect the generality of the Catholics as bad subjects, who would be ready to rise against her upon a favourable occasion. Though she was often arbitrary, and sometimes unjust, she cannot be convicted of executing numbers purely for religion, when her deposition was so strongly threatened and attempted from that quarter. Upon the whole, zeal has often been carried too far by every party, but by none so far, for so long a time, and with so little provocation, as by the Papists. Whereas the Church of England has for more than a century suffered the Catholics to live in peace and quietness. If this be acknowledged, what occasion is there to represent the Catholics, as in a *forlorn* condition, and deprived of their rights? And if it be not, we may surely complain of want of gratitude, and justly suspect that such discontented spirits would make use of power for the purpose of oppression.

z P. 66. l. 17.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

HOW FAR THE MODERN PAPISTS ARE
CHARGEABLE WITH THE FAULTS OF
THEIR ANCESTORS.

WHATEVER cruelties the Papists have been guilty of formerly, and with whatever superstitions they may have clogged the Christian Religion; if we were certain that they now abhorred the one, and had abolished the other, we should by no means impute to them either the crimes or the follies of their ancestors. The true question then is, how far the present Catholics may be suspected of treading in the steps of their predecessors, if they were entrusted with equal power. No man can be justly charged with the crimes of another, except he assists, encourages, approves, or palliates the wicked action; or is guided by the same principles, which induced the other to be guilty. A society therefore may be chargeable in general with faults, from which many individuals may be free, if they renounce the principles, which lead to those actions. And in the same manner a whole society may be cleared of the odium, when they evidently shew, that they have in any particular amended their principles and practice. The longer any evil custom has prevailed,

prevailed, and the more it has been sanctioned by authority and numbers, the clearer should be the proof, that a total change of principle has taken place. To apply this to the present case, persecution for religious opinions has prevailed so long in the Church of Rome, and been exerted with such cruelty, that we should have strong evidence of their change of disposition before we can with prudence trust to their mercy. Though Protestants have occasionally been guilty of shameful barbarities; yet these cannot with justice be pronounced equal in number or duration. We grant that the Papists in general have relaxed much of their severity, that the English were never so much the slaves of the Pope as many other nations, and that at present the Catholics in this country may be more enlightened, both in civil and religious principles, than in any other kingdom. But it gives us a poor idea of any essential amendment in the doctrines of Popery, when its champions are perpetually priding themselves that they are Christians of the *old stamp*, at the same time that they own the Pope has abused his power; and denying that the Church encourages or ever encouraged the execution of heretics, when the Inquisition was established by papal authority, and ecclesiastics have always determined which persons were fit to be apprehended, and whether they were innocent or guilty of the crimes laid to their charge. If the champions of Popery would prove, that

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they do not entertain principles, which directly lead to cruelty and hatred, they should tell us without sneers upon our ^h ignorance, what authority is necessary and sufficient to constitute a decree of their Church, which of the privileges claimed by the Popes are truly belonging to the Bishop of Rome, and which are usurpations, whether their present faith is the same with that of former ages, what power in their Church can rectify abuses, and whether it can be exercised without the Pope's consent, whether the whole Catholic Church entertains the same opinion concerning his authority, and by what method the Faith of the English Catholics is fixed, when they differ so far from foreigners in their notions of obedience, as ⁱ to prefer that name to the denomination of Papists. With respect likewise to ourselves we should desire to be informed, whether they allow us to be members of Christ's Catholic Church, whether they admit our ministry to be equally valid with their own, and what doctrines in our Liturgy are so heretical, that ^k an English Catholic would rather die than join willingly in our worship? If these questions were plainly answered, we should probably either see, that our modern Papists must quit the claim of the Unity of their Church, and their boast of greater comparative antiquity; or that their loyalty and moderation do not stand

^h P. 7. l. 13.ⁱ Ib. l. 17.^k P. 16. l. 24.

upon

upon so firm a foundation, as they would have us believe. We should rejoice to see them entirely forsake the chief errors of Popery, if they continued to differ from us in points of less importance. But whilst they remain in the Communion of the See of Rome, we must believe that they will continue in a great measure under its influence.

C H A P. VIII.

OBSERVATIONS UPON MR. MILNER.

MR. Milner professes in his Preface, that his object is ¹ *to vindicate his Religion not barely from vague calumnies, but from a direct and severe attack.* By whom this attack was made, or upon what occasion, he is entirely silent. The reader is therefore left to guess, whether the Catholics are universally ^m *accused of cherishing a hatred of other Christians, and considering themselves as bound by no ties of humanity, duty, allegiance, or oaths, when they stand in competition with the interests of religion.* We may acquit the generality of this charge in it's full extent; and yet deny that Popery is equally pure in it's doctrines with the Church of England, or that the behaviour of Papists towards heretics has been equally humane with the treatment of Papists by the Protestants in this kingdom.

Mr. Milner is not content with defending his Church from the charge of cruelty; but represents the persons, who bring this charge, as guilty of an unfair method of arguing, ⁿ *by passing over every shining page in the long history of*

¹ P. 1. l. 3.^m P. 5. l. 11.ⁿ P. 6. l. 8.

the Church, and singling out such only as are disgraceful to her; by suppressing the heroic virtues of so many saints in all ages, and the essential obligations which modern Churches have to the Parent Church in converting them from Paganism, and handing down to them the sacred writings, and the body of their faith and discipline. Protestant writers have, I hope, in general as much justice, candour, and impartiality, as the champions of Popery. We acknowledge that there have been many good men amongst the Catholics in all ages, and Protestants have been equally ready with Papists to do justice to their virtues. But when we charge the Church of Rome with any particular bad quality, the question only requires, that we should enumerate those persons in her favour, who eminently exerted the opposite disposition. If therefore we can bring a long list of princes, prelates, and pontiffs, who have been guilty of deliberate and enormous cruelty, it must impress every sensible and humane man with [°] *horrible ideas of the ancient Church of Rome: and of all who adhere to it*; unless they can enumerate as many, who were permitted to shew favour to heretics, or can prove that they have entirely abandoned the doctrine and practice of persecution for opinions.

We are accused of forgetting [°] *the essential obligations due to the parent Church.* Admitting,

[°] P. 6. l. 18.

[°] Ib. l. 11.

which might be disputed, that our ancestors were converted from Paganism by the missionaries of the Church of Rome, this would enforce no duty upon us besides gratitude. Mr. Milner does not inform us what are those obligations, which he calls essential. I will suppose therefore, 'till the contrary is proved, that they do not imply obedience to her decrees, compliance with her corruptions, nor concurrence with her deviations from the doctrines of the Scriptures. If we received the body of our faith and discipline with the sacred writings from the Church of Rome, we have made a proper return by keeping all the articles of faith, which were judged to be agreeable to these holy writings, and making the word of God himself the sole guide of our faith and morals. Discipline, which is changeable in things indifferent, we claim the liberty, which we allow to others, of altering at our pleasure.

This conduct of our polemic writers is next contrasted with the behaviour of Catholic preachers, who are said never to enumerate *the crimes of Protestants in order to inspire their hearers with ill-will and jealousy, or to charge modern Protestants with the crimes committed by their ancestors.* But we do not directly charge the modern Papists with the guilt of the cruelty committed by their ancestors, nor say that they are necessarily guided by the same principle.

^a P. 6. l. 21.

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We say, indeed, and believe from these examples, that Popery has been a cruel religion, and that the present and future Papists, if entrusted with power, would, according to circumstances and their natural dispositions, be in danger of treading in the steps of their forefathers.

Mr. Milner complains, that *any one should ascribe tenets to others which they do not openly avow in their Creeds*; and that the Catholics are worse treated than all other denominations of Christians, *in not being allowed to lay down their own tenets, but having Creeds manufactured by others, and being condemned for opinions and practices, which they reject and anathematize*. But an open avowal of a principle is not the only method, by which we judge of a man's opinions. His actions are often thought a much surer indication of his inward sentiments, than his professions. A Papist, therefore, when he is judged to hold principles productive of such actions, as he openly practises and boasts of in time of security and prosperity, is treated in the same manner as all other men. Creeds are undoubtedly good evidence of the opinions of any Church. But it should be allowed, that their practice on important occasions is likewise to be looked upon as a strong proof that they are tainted with such principles, according to the frequency of the actions, and the dignity and au-

^r P. 7. l. 8.

^s P. 7. l. 10.

thority of the persons who are guilty. For as we disbelieve a man's pretences, when they are contradicted by his general conduct, the mere want of a profession cannot be sufficient to prove, that particular principles are not held in a Church, which has shewn her approbation of them by a continued practice. When we accuse the Papists of cruelty, we do not involve every one in the accusation. One man is not answerable for the actions of another, unless he promotes, aids, commands, or palliates such evil deeds. And as it is possible that any society may change it's principles, posterity will be free from the guilt of their ancestors, provided they reform their faith and morals.

Mr. Milner had before complained, that 'we ascribe to them practices and opinions they condemn, and triumphantly asked, "*where are the proofs of these charges? Do they occur in our professed doctrinal books, or in the decisions of our Councils? Are they drawn from the general conduct of the nations around us, or from the behaviour of our Catholic ancestors? Were our forefathers no more than an unprincipled banditti, until the last of the Henries taught them the system of right morals?*" I have already examined, whether the English and Romish Churches are equally to be condemned or acquitted of cruelty in their principles and conduct; I shall there-

^t P. 5. l. 8.

^u P. 5. l. 23.

fore now only observe, that the last sentence conveys a false insinuation. No Protestant writer calls them an unprincipled banditti; though we think, that they would have behaved with a more Christian spirit, if they had not on some occasions been persuaded by the Pope to acts of persecution. Neither do we ascribe our system of right morals to Henry the eighth in any other sense, than as he allowed his subjects to draw their information from the Scriptures, which had been in a great measure withheld from the laity, and shut up in an unknown tongue.

To the argument that " Papists are no more answerable for the cruelties of their ancestors, than the Protestants for the persecutions, of which they are asserted to have been equally guilty, I reply, that the cases are not similar; and that we are ready to allow to such Catholics as abhor persecution all the indulgence, which we claim for ourselves. The cruelties exercised by the Protestants were not equal in greatness, number, or duration. They were not instigated and contrived by the sanction of successive governors of the Church, nor carried on in a manner that can be called systematical. The generality of the Protestants are now willing to let the Catholics live in equal peace with themselves. When the Papists universally disclaim the right of persecution, and acknowledge

us for fellow Christians ; we may suppose that the example of their forefathers has lost it's influence. But whilst they are taught to look upon all that do not own the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, as out of the Church of Christ, and we are exposed to ridicule and contempt from their champions for defending our tenets, and vindicating our writers from the charge of calumny and misrepresentation ; we may see that the root of bitterness still remains, and might justly fear a return of oppression, if they were again entrusted with their former power.

With respect to * sedition, it is certain, that the Popes have many times stirred up the subjects of those Princes, who incurred their displeasure, to rebellion. In the present age the power and influence of the Pope are so much lessened, that we may hope such practices will never be repeated. We do not therefore accuse the present generation of the crimes of their forefathers, as long as they shew no disposition to imitate or excuse their bad actions. But it deserves here to be remarked, that though Mr. Milner speaks with detestation of the gunpowder treason ; yet he takes occasion to cast an indirect reflection upon our Church, by asserting that *the plan was borrowed from a similar plot concerted by certain Protestant noblemen.* Whether Lord Darnley was blown up in his house by the contrivance

* P. 10. l. 18.

† P. 12. l. 12.

of Protestants or Papists is a matter of very little signification. For if the latter plot was taken from the former, it was increased to a much more extensive mischief. What was the full design will perhaps never be known in this world. And we may possibly remain ignorant, whether the conspirators intended to prevent the Catholic Lords from sharing the same fate, or neglected their safety in pursuit of their revenge.

When Mr. Milner mentions ^zin the strongest colours the bad effects to the Papists of the riots in 1780; he should either have omitted the destruction of property, or have acknowledged the reparation, which was received from our law. The riots were indeed occasioned by a variety of causes besides zeal for religion. A tumultuous spirit had for many years been cherished by pretended patriots. The petitioners were so imprudent, as to chuse a president, who had given proofs of an outrageous and factious disposition. They were assembled in too great numbers, and either themselves insulted the very persons, whom they acknowledged as judges of the cause, or tamely suffered them to be grossly abused. Whereas, if they really intended to behave in a peaceable manner, they should have seized every one that disgraced their party by rapine, violence, and attempts to murder. To

^z P. 12. l. 5.

this may be added, that the Catholics had increased the odium against them, and fear of their future designs, by not appearing contented with the indulgence already granted, unless it were considered as a prelude to more ample favours.

Mr. Milner next defends his Church from that impious position, that **faith is not to be kept with Heretics*, with a charge of ignorance or malevolence against all who ascribe to them such a tenet. He may be right, that this doctrine was never formally established; and that it has been formally condemned in one general Council. He has brought likewise a satisfactory argument of the conscientious behaviour in this respect of the English Catholics. But I do not know, that their whole Church was ever accused of holding this position in plain terms. Our objection is, that the Pope is acknowledged to have so much power and influence, and claims such a licence to declare void all engagements, which he deems prejudicial to the Church, that it is dangerous to trust to the mercy or promises of the Papists. There have undoubtedly been many instances of breach of faith amongst Protestants; and some may be of opinion, that there is not the same integrity to be observed in public affairs, as in private transactions. All such principles and practices are to be condemned. But still those are most dangerous amongst whom

* P. 15. l. 1.

we find the greatest number of such instances, and established by the highest authority. Though private Catholics therefore may be worthy of credit, and deserve protection, whilst they remain quiet; we may justly be afraid to trust them with power, or to suffer them to rule this kingdom with equal auspices.

We are next told, that ^b our constitution was planned, and in a great measure executed by Catholics. We do not deny that members of the Church of Rome may have a love for civil liberty, and promote it in some instances notwithstanding their religion. But we assert that the freedom of our constitution is by no means owing to the doctrines of Popery. When the foundation was laid, in the days of Alfred and Edward, the power of the Pope was inconsiderable in these realms, and not at it's height in any part of the world; and when it was finished, the reformation favoured our deliverance from every species of tyranny. But though Magna Charta was signed at the demand of Popish Lords; yet the Pope himself was so far from lending his assistance, that he would have favoured a tyrant in his usurpations over his subjects, because he was meanly become a vassal of the See of Rome. The constitutions of Clarendon, in the reign of Henry the second, had been likewise disapproved and abrogated by the Pope. Though civil liberty may therefore flou-

^b P. 16. l. 8.

rish in a kingdom, which yields a limited obedience to the Bishop of Rome, and resists many of his usurpations ; yet it is liable to inconveniences from such a religion ; and it is wisest to exclude him and his dependants from all power, 'till it is proved from what source he derives his authority.

C H A P. IX.

OBSERVATIONS UPON MR. BERINGTON.

MR. Berington to establish the rights of Dissenters and Roman Catholics to all places of power, profit, and honour, assumes five propositions. First *that the Revolution in 1688 was a general benefit to all British subjects*. This proposition we readily grant. But it wants proof, that the design of king James in his exercise of the dispensing power was barely ^e *to relieve a suffering society*. He evidently desired to establish Popery in all its pomp and dominion; and our religious as well as civil liberties were in equal danger. If the ^d *name of Religion possesses a fascinating power*, it is to be wished, that the spirit of it really pervaded all mankind, and that they would give the due preference to religious over civil motives. When Mr. Berington calls the Catholics ^e *a proscribed society*, he ought to clear them of the plots, which they have laid for the destruction of all heretics, and the rebellions, which they have fomented against the state of these kingdoms.

He ascribes the adherence of the Catholics to the family of the Pretender, to ^f *the idea of he-*

^e P. 4. l. 24.

^d P. 5. l. 17.

^e P. 8. l. 9.

^f P. 9. l. 2.

reditary

editary right. It seems wonderful, that almost the whole body of the Catholics should be of this opinion, if their religion was out of the question. The civil excesses of king James were owing to their instigation, and the influence of Popery upon his mind. The Catholics joined in frequent plots against king William. They have encouraged two rebellions against the present royal family; and are now loyal, when the cause of Jacobitism is desperate, and the Pretender's name almost extinct. Mr. Berington may have sense to value the Revolution, and condemn the introduction of religion by arbitrary measures. But the generality of the ignorant Catholics would scarcely be so scrupulous, if a favourable opportunity offered of extending their religion; unless they differ more from the Papists of former days than has yet been proved by the modern champions of Popery.

The second proposition is, that *the benefits of the Revolution should be communicated to all British subjects.* Mr. Berington admits, that bodies of men may justly be restrained from those benefits, *if their practical principles tend to generate strife.* We apprehend that the practical principles of Popery tend to generate strife and oppression, and upon this point may be joined the issue of the whole dispute. They have commonly been persecutors when in power, and

would probably consider heretics, whom they deny to be christians, as unworthy of enjoying the same privileges with themselves. They have long had toleration by custom, they are now freed from many penalties, and would not be opposed by the Church of England in a farther relaxation; if they aimed at no more than to enjoy their opinions in peace and security. As their disloyalty was chiefly owing to their religion, they do not ^h stand upon the same ground as other Jacobites.

The third proposition is, that *the English Catholics hold no principles or opinions, which should exclude them from the benefits of the Revolution.* The English Catholics acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope over the whole Christian Church, and that canonical obedience is due to his commands. The question then is, what prerogatives are included under the idea of supremacy, and to what articles this obedience is extended. Whatever has been claimed by a succession of Popes, or submitted to by the generality of Papists for a length of time, seems to have been once part of this Supremacy. If this be not admitted as the present standard of the English Catholics; let their advocates declare what articles they admit, and what they reject; and how they reconcile their boasted Unity of the Roman Church with a difference in material

^h P. 16. l. 22.

points from a number of ancient Popes, and the opinions and practice of foreign nations professing the same faith. Mr. Berington and the others frequently call Popery the ⁱ *Old Religion*. Antiquity at first sight claims our veneration. The doctrines of Scripture are the only tenets of Christianity, which deserve to be honoured with the name of Old. Popery therefore should either prove, that it's doctrines are conformable to the scriptures, or relinquish its claim to antiquity ; since erroneous opinions ought equally to be corrected, whether they be new or old, as soon as they are shewn to be contradicted by the Word of God.

Mr. Berington admits, that ^k *religious tenets, which influence remotely the public conduct of the citizen, or which lead to the admission of opinions, by which the peace and well-being of society may be affected, may become the matter of legal discussion, and be proscribed*. The English Catholics therefore may justly be excluded from power, if they hold such notions of the Pope's supremacy, as would induce them to become rebels or persecutors at his command ; or if they are intimately connected with foreign Catholics, and boast of their Union, as making one true Church, with such as hold these principles. If the English Catholics differ from foreign Papists in a point of such importance, as the authority of the Pope, the Church of Rome is no longer

ⁱ P. 19. l. 3.^k P. 20. l. 27.

one ; and if they agree, the opinion of the majority, and of the Pope himself, may have great influence to make them yield to any particular claim, though it be contrary to their present professions. The power indeed of the Pope has not lately been exerted to the disturbance of kings, and his authority is now entirely slighted in civil affairs. But whilst his supremacy is acknowledged by all Catholics ; if ignorance and bigotry should again prevail, his claims may be gradually revived to a great extent.

Mr. Berington wants it to be allowed, that *'every man's religion teaches him to be virtuous.* True religion rightly understood has undoubtedly that effect. But erroneous opinions may so pervert good principles, as to make them produce bad practices. Thus zeal for the honour of God may in blind and superstitious minds be the parent of persecution. It is not therefore necessary to make a sect or party dangerous, that they should universally and openly avow such tenets. It is sufficient to put us upon our guard, that a persecuting spirit has frequently displayed itself in great numbers of that communion, when in power, and that this has not been confined to mean and ignorant persons ; but has been indulged by the rulers in church and state, whose influence and example are of great force, and who should be thought to understand best the doctrines and rule of their own Church. The cruelties practised

¹ P. 21. l. 10.

by the Catholics have been too great, general, and of longer continuance than to be ascribed merely to the ^m excesses of individuals. And if individuals in that Church can excite massacres, burn heretics, and depose kings, uncontrouled by the rest ; it surely becomes all Protestants, who regard their safety, not to trust them with power. It may be far from an universal tenet amongst Catholics, that no faith is to be kept with heretics. But the more numerous the instances are in any sect of breach of faith, the more careful we should be how we trust those of the same communion. There are good men as well as bad in the Church of Rome ; and no Protestant condemns all without distinction. Mr. Berington should therefore either shew, that such tenets have never been held by any Papists, or own that there is need of caution according to their frequency. Several Popes have absolved men from their oaths, and attempted to depose princes. Whatever disgust therefore the subject may raise in Mr. Berington, he should attempt a new refutation of the charge of breach of faith ; or point out a former, which makes this nugatory. Such a method would be more satisfactory to the impartial than his censure of the Bishop of Cloyne, or his sarcasms upon his new allies, the ⁿ Protestant Dissenters. The conduct of the Papists has not always refuted these charges. No

^m P. 21. l. 11.ⁿ P. 22. l. 12.

writer charges every individual with holding these tenets. But as the Popes have often assumed the power of absolving men from their oaths, and the Catholics through the whole world are subject to the same head, and linked together in a strong band of unity; supposing the English to be universally free from such an opinion, there is danger that some may hereafter be infected; unless such doctrine were fully disclaimed by their whole Church in a general council, and that decision confirmed by the Pope himself. Mr. Berington should prove, as well as assert, that *the first Reformers assumed a general system of heaping a mountain of obloquy on the Romish Church*. Many of them suffered death in consequence of their faith; and consequently would have continued in communion with what he calls the Old Church, if they had not held it sinful. Some of the charges of the Protestants against the Papists may be mistakes; and the latter may have reformed in some doctrines. But I believe in general they were rightly accused of holding the tenets ascribed to them at the Reformation; and several of their errors have neither been since disavowed by authority, nor universally rejected; though they are said to be disclaimed by the English Catholics. Mr. Berington therefore needed not to have used so much warmth in these two ^p pages, nor have pretended

^o P. 22. l. 28.

^p pp. 22. 23.

to grant the false maxim, that ^q *all societies in similar circumstances are actuated alike*. Their zeal in support of their opinions may be equally strong; and yet some may think those means lawful to obtain their end, which are abhorred by others. The Christian Religion plainly forbids all slander, lies, and false accusations; and no sincere Protestant can wilfully make use of such vile arts, even in defence of the truth.

The Church of Rome is charged with idolatry for bowing down to images. ^r The Church of England, from a similar charge for their adoration of the Trinity, can feel, says Mr. Berington, on their own experience, what weight such a charge has. The cases are far from similar. The Church of England believes the doctrine of the Trinity from the authority of the scriptures. But the scriptures are so far from commanding images to be worshipped, that they forbid them to be made with any such intention. It requires therefore some better argument than a bare assertion to acquit the Catholics of the charge of idolatry. And though the images of the Papists ^s honestly purchased do not concern the civil magistrate; yet if any of them be so zealous for the honour of his wooden saint, that he would punish the breaker of an image beyond the intrinsic value, or revenge a mere affront to his idol with real injury; such an one is not fit to

^q P. 23. l. 10.^r P. 23. l. 19.^s Ib. l. 26.

be trusted with power in a Protestant country. Besides, let Mr. Berington and every Papist seriously consider, upon what principles he justifies a practice so plainly forbidden in the second commandment, and so similar to the idolatry of the heathen, that the arguments, which excuse the one, will palliate the other.

Mr. Berington next enquires, what would be the consequence of the re-establishment of Popery, and determines, that '*no power of the Pope would be admitted, which could most distantly affect the civil government, or the liberty of the subject*'; because it would be limited by the decision of the legislature. If by re-established he only means tolerated, he may be nearly right. But if he supposes the Catholics to be possessed of legislative or executive power, we may from reason and experience conclude, that it would frequently be employed to the oppression of the Protestants, and the danger of the national Church. They are in general filled with great zeal for their opinions, and partiality for their own sect. They are bred up in contempt for our persons, as heretics, and detestation of our worship; though it resembles their own, when stripped of superstitions. The Pope indeed now does not send out his threatening bulls, because they would be despised. And persecution has so far ceased in Popish countries, that heretics

^t P. 31. l. 28.

are no longer punished with death. But can any one say, that the violent part of the Catholics may not again prevail over the moderate, and the cruelties of the Inquisition be in some measure revived? England, it is true, was never equally subject to the Pope with some kingdoms; but the promises of queen Mary and king James, which were soon broken, shew what dependence is to be put upon the mercy of the Papists. If therefore the Church of Rome should recover the whole or part of it's power in these realms, we might be suffered to enjoy for a time all our present rights. But at favourable opportunities the Pope would endeavour to extend his authority; as we may learn from history, that he has never been slack to seize all occasions. The Papists are not envied a peaceable toleration; but are very unfit to be trusted with power.

" Though the Pope of Rome has no right to any temporal jurisdiction; yet he has formerly pretended to controul kings in the exercise of their just prerogatives. Though he has no concern with their governments, nor with the people's rights, property, or privileges; yet he has on many occasions intermeddled with them all; and if he should recover his influence, would probably repeat some of his usurpations. More than one Pope has dispensed with the most so-

lemn engagements, and dissolved the allegiance of subjects. He has violated the constitution of national Churches, by requiring that their prelates should buy of him the confirmation of their titles, and unjustly exacting large sums, as first fruits and Peter pence. He has often threatened those magistrates, who rejected his bulls, with spiritual penalties. Whilst therefore the English Catholics admit the Supremacy of the Pope, and ^w Mr. Berington thinks it impossible to define it's extent, they hold a principle or opinion, which should exclude them from some of the benefits of the Revolution. They hold an obedience to be due to all the lawful commands of the Pope; and have not defined which are lawful, by any sufficient authority. The English Catholics have no power to make decrees contrary to the sense of their Church; and therefore seem too much under the influence of the Pope, if he should tread again in the steps of his predecessors, and get his commands confirmed by a Council, or sanctioned by the consent of his own college of Cardinals. In such a case their inclinations would favour the Pope, their attachment would be weakened towards an heretical prince, and their judgment being strongly biased, even the virtuous might be mistaken in points of morality, and notwithstanding ^x the assertion of Mr. Milner, submit

^w P. 30. l. 20.^x P. 13. l. 17.

to his mandates, when they were contrary to moral rectitude.

Mr. Berington in his fourth proposition condemns the establishment of all national Churches, *as unauthorised by the spirit of Christianity; not promoting the cause of religion; and hurtful to the general interest of the State.* I shall only defend the Church of England against these accusations, and leave him to reconcile his profession of such principles, with his palliation of the Church of Rome in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. But though his censures are general against national Churches, they seem chiefly aimed against our establishment. His book is written in English to promote the abolition of the Test Act, and is therefore not intended by himself to have any influence in Popish kingdoms.

The design of our Saviour was to convert the world to the true religion, and to establish a spiritual kingdom. As Princes are called upon to embrace the faith, as well as their subjects, they ought in their stations to endeavour to keep that faith pure and uncorrupted. This is the office assigned to Kings by the Church of England. And to preserve the truth, or propagate the faith, even by human means, cannot be unauthorised by the spirit of Christianity. Kings were left by the Christian religion in their former dignity. Whilst they were Pagans, they persecuted the Christians, though faithful subjects.

jects. When they were converted, it was lawful to give them encouragement and protection. We do not hold any necessary connection or alliance between Church and State. But when a kingdom is become Christian, it is the duty of every man, according to his station, to promote the cause of virtue and the gospel. We therefore ascribe no more power to our civil governors in religious affairs, than we find assumed by the best Kings of Judah under the Jewish dispensation. King David gave commandment to remove the ark to Jerusalem. Solomon ejected Abiathar from the high priesthood. Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah are commended for exerting themselves in the reformation of religion. A national Church therefore in itself is no where forbidden in the gospel, and seems authorised by the spirit of Christianity, which would have the whole world converted, and hold the unity of the spirit in the bond of love.

If Mr. Berington means, that Christian states are not at liberty to pass laws in support of such Ecclesiastical discipline, as directly tends to the increase of virtue, he should avow it in express words. If he means only to censure the Church establishments, which he afterwards enumerates, his expressions are too general. Our Saviour did not want or employ temporal power for the establishment of his spiritual kingdom; and has therefore by his example condemned all wars and persecutions for the propagation of his religion.

gion. But he has not forbidden his disciples to enforce the moral duties, even by temporal motives ; since under Christianity the magistrate is still ^y *the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil*. And though our Lord took his apostles from their nets, poor and uninstructed; he armed them with miracles, and endued them with wisdom, which none of their adversaries could gainsay or resist. These powers and gifts have long since ceased. The Church must therefore now be supported by human means and abilities, dependent upon the blessing of God, and the secret assistance of his holy spirit. We are not therefore made to understand, ^z that religion and polity are so far different, that they are never to support each other. The object of both is happiness. And they are not so exactly divided between temporal and eternal happiness, as to hinder religion from producing temporal prosperity; or the good laws of a well ordered state from contributing to form the graces of a Christian.

What follows concerning ^a Church establishments, is a description of the encroachments of Popery before the reformation. How Mr. Berington reconciles these principles with the doctrines of his own Church must be shewn by him some other time. He disclaims the excessive power of the Pope. But what effectual

^y Romans xiii. 4.

^z P. 37. l. 13.

^a P. 38.

steps did the Ecclesiastical part of his communion ever take to curb these excesses? They were abolished at the reformation; and our Church has now no farther connection with the State, than to receive from it maintenance and protection, and to repay submission and allegiance.

But it is objected, that national Churches ^b *do not promote the real cause of religion. The cause of religion is promoted by the prevalence of those doctrines, which, rendering man more perfect in his moral capacity, fit him for happiness in a future state of existence.* If then a national Church teaches the doctrines of the gospel, it promotes morality, and deserves to be encouraged by the state. If it has corrupted these doctrines, the more it is fixed and established, the greater will be the hurt to mankind. Religion therefore is promoted by an establishment, in case the doctrines be true; and hurt, if they be erroneous; whether there be unity or diversity of belief. The croud then of evils, reckoned up in page 41, ^c *does not proceed from the nature of an establishment, but from the violence of men's passions; and persecution, which is the chief, is most commonly exerted in support of falshood.*

The next objection against an establishment is, that it contains ^d *no plan for the extension of*

^b P. 40. l. 17.

^c P. 41. l. 14.

^d P. 41. l. 20.

virtue;

virtue; but promotes *the growth of the selfish and worldly passions*. If Church establishments are too large, they may entice men to enter into the holy function through improper motives. But this is no just argument against a decent and comfortable provision for the ministers of the gospel. However then this reasoning may be conclusive against foreign monasteries; in a pamphlet published in England concerning the Test Act, it may well be judged beside the question, unless it were particularly shewn, how far it affects our Church. But, says he, amongst the Dissenters *‘their ministers are more dependent and active, and their flocks better attended, and consequently more regular and religious*. If the ministers are more dependent, it is often a misfortune; since we are ministers of Christ, and ought to be free to preach the doctrines of his gospel. If they are more active to promote real virtue, they ought to be imitated. Whether their flocks or ours be more religious, the true faith ought to be preserved, and errors in doctrine to be no less avoided, than faults in practice. Our Church, by her daily service, her allowance of reading the Scriptures, as well as the exhortation and instruction of her ministers, teaches plainly the way of salvation; and it must be partly the fault of any of her members, if he suffers the ignorance or negligence of his regular

teacher to make him careless or deficient in the knowledge of his duty. Evils arise from both extremes of extravagance and defect in the support of the Church; and it is unfair to enumerate all the mischiefs of one, without any hint of the danger of the other. But the mode of maintaining our ministers is objected to, and tythes are called ^f *a compulsory and unfair contribution.* ^g *Of all the grievances of establishments this comes nearest,* says he, *to a man's feelings.* A man's feelings are not the best judges of right and wrong. The feelings of an unjust or covetous man tempt him to think it an hardship to pay what is due. To the question therefore, ^h *is the cause of religion here promoted?* we may answer, that the cause of religion is promoted, when the gospel of Christ is faithfully preached; and that the labourer is worthy of his hire. Mr. Berington says, *'the workman, I know, deserves his wages. But then he must work, and he must work for me, and I am free to hire him; or he takes from me what he has not earned.* But we are ministers of Christ, and not servants hired by individuals to humour their caprices; and it is lawful for any government to appoint the same method of supporting the Church, which was formerly chosen by God himself. The moderate maintenance therefore of ministers by tythes is lawful, and in a Church re-

^f P. 42. l. 17, ^g Ib. 27. ^h P. 42. l. 29. ⁱ P. 42. l. 24.

formed to the doctrines of the gospel, promotes the cause of religion.

Mr. Berington next produces the example of St. Paul, whose own hands ministered to his necessities, and the censure of our Saviour upon the pride of the Scribes and Pharisees. I cannot believe, that he seriously thinks it fit for ministers in this age to exercise some manual trade, and thus divert their time from study and reflection. St. Paul was divinely inspired, and wanted no improvement by human means. But though he preached the gospel without charge to the Corinthians for particular reasons; yet he frequently insists upon the right, which all ministers have to live on the gospel. With respect to our Saviour's censure, we know that pride and covetousness are undoubtedly vices. But they are not the necessary consequences of Ecclesiastical establishments. And though he ^k*can find no good effects*; yet it is evident that a legal establishment keeps up a succession of men to teach the same doctrines. And if these doctrines be true, the honour of God and increase of virtue must be thereby promoted.

The last objection is, that establishments in religion ^l*are hurtful to the general interest of the state*. Though the excessive emoluments and power claimed by the Church of Rome have been hurtful to many kingdoms; yet the pro-

^k P. 43. l. 14.

^l P. 43. l. 19.

vision and protection granted by our laws may be proved beneficial. It is conducive to the general interest of the state, that the gospel should be preached in purity and truth. And as we have great reason to suppose, that numbers of the Papists and Dissenters are eager to work the ruin of the Church ; necessity obliges us to wish, that they may be deprived of the power of executing their design. The most beneficial state in a kingdom would be, that all were of one mind, and professed the true religion. The next is, that all were so benevolent, as to allow a mutual toleration. In the latter case the necessity of tests would cease, and possibly at times their expediency likewise. That the Church of Rome, when in power, has been commonly intolerant, history informs us ; and that the Dissenters have shewn the same spirit, the experience of the last century proves. The Church of England has in general been much more moderate ; and those, who affect to think themselves *'forlorn*, and are discontented with their present situation, betray some ingratitude for the relaxations they enjoy, and give a bad omen of the manner, in which they would employ any farther indulgence.

But an establishment, says Mr. Berington, hinders the state from ^m*possessing the attachment, or commanding the services of all it's members.*

^l P. 66. l. 17.

^m P. 43. l. 28.

In places of honour the state only wants the service of a few. And it is better to be deprived of the personal assistance of part of our fellow subjects, than trust numbers of them with arms, especially as officers, who have so often endeavoured to spread their false religion with fire and sword. The loyalty of the Papists is of a late date. And we have no proof, that the generality entertain benevolent affections towards the professors of any other branch of the Christian religion. Besides, the attachment of any particular sect to the state, when they stand upon terms, can seldom be procured by granting common rights, if they be not favoured with the exclusive possession of dignity and power.

We may grant part of Mr. Berington's fifth proposition, that ⁿ *the national Church of this country is not essential to it's civil constitution.* But it does not follow, that ^o *it would be equally safe in the hands of the Dissenters or Roman Catholics*; or that the state should not protect the present establishment for it's religious benefits. Our civil rights might be secured by men of any religion, who were duly sensible of their nature and value. But perhaps there are none equal to true Protestants of the Church of England in zeal for our constitution, or in tenets agreeable to loyalty and liberty. Our Popish

ⁿ P. 47. l. 1,

^o Ib. l. 2.

ancestors resisted many of the impositions of the Church of Rome. But at the same time they yielded to some, that were not a little grievous. For though, when the power of that Church was highest in these realms, a man could not be executed for a civil offence without a trial by his peers ; yet for the suspicion of heresy he might be imprisoned and subject to very barbarous usage, and put to an ignominious and cruel death without any such privilege. Even our civil constitution therefore was not so perfect in the hands of the Papists.

The design of king James ^p *in granting toleration to sectaries* has been always looked upon as very evident. Mr. Berington *believes that it was not to overturn the national Church*. Many others are convinced, that his chief intention was to introduce Popery. The assertion, that nothing could be more indifferent to a patriot king, and a patriot legislature than the stability or fall of the national Church, and that their ^q *sole attention must ever be directed to the preservation and strength of the civil constitution*, sets too little value upon the doctrines of religion. Our expectations from Christianity are infinitely beyond all temporal blessings. And every wise man, when he cannot enjoy both, would rather part with his civil than religious rights. Every patriot king therefore, and every

^p P. 55. l. 13.

^q Ib. l. 20.

patriot legislature will take care, that the purest doctrines of Christianity be set before the people ; that, if they make a bad choice, and prefer the decisions of men to the Word of God, or are captivated with the name of the Old Church, and do not consider, whether it's doctrines be conformable to the precepts of the Gospel, the fault may rest upon their own heads. In short, high and low should be careful to chuse the way of truth ; and though we ought not to attempt to compel others, we should do all in our power to lead them into the paths of salvation.

Our ancestors, who made the Test Laws, are accused of establishing the '*monstrous paradox, that taking the Sacrament should qualify for wearing his majesty's cockade.*' We may appeal to every impartial person, whether this be a true state of the question. Is an officer, then, only a man who wears a cockade ? King James tampered with the foldiers to overturn our civil and religious liberties ; and those, who are here mentioned as wearing cockades, had no small power and influence in the army. I do not design to enter into a defence of all the penal laws. But when they are arraigned, the practices and provocations of the Catholics and Dissenters should be stated at the same time, and they should be fairly quoted according to their meaning.

Before Mr. Berington draws his conclusion,

he recapitulates the propositions, which he seems to himself to have established. But whilst the English Catholics acknowledge such authority in the Pope, they cannot be justly said *to hold no opinions, which should exclude them from some of the benefits of the Revolution*; and he has failed to prove that our *'civil constitution would be equally safe in the hands of the Dissenters or Catholics*, as in those of the national Church. The treatment therefore of the Papists does not deserve to be called *"a rod of iron"*, whilst they are allowed to live in equal peace and security with others, are double taxed in name, and not in reality, and only deprived of power, which they have formerly abused. *"France, it is said, has set us the example of granting equal privileges to all citizens. What relaxation France will permit in religious points is not yet certain. But if all Catholic kingdoms should allow equality of jurisdiction to Protestants, there is some reason, why we should be cautious, how we admit the Catholics to the same favour. Protestants acknowledge no foreign jurisdiction; and are not therefore liable to be tempted externally from their humanity or allegiance. Whereas Catholics admit a supremacy in the Pope, the extent of which Mr. Berington has not satisfactorily defined, either positively or negatively; since the negative part of his de-*

^s P. 59. l. 18.^t Ib. l. 22.^u P. 66. l. 23.^w Ib. l. 25

finition is not sanctioned by the general practice of the Popes, and unless the doctrines and rules of the Church of Rome should be greatly reformed, a Pope may canonically be guilty of much severity and oppression against those, who deliver the truths of the gospel. We do not wish to oppress the Papists. But before we can think ourselves safe from persecution and oppression, if they obtained power, we must be acknowledged by them as fellow christians, the authority of the Pope be clearly defined, and above all we should be informed, how far the English Catholics are bound to form or change their opinions by the voice of their Church, and what promises of obedience their bishops and priests make to the Pope, when they are consecrated or ordained.

C H A P. X.

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE CHURCH OF ROME AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, IN POINTS WHERE THEY DIFFER IN FAITH OR PRACTICE ; FROM WHICH IT MAY BE JUDGED, WHOSE DOCTRINE IS MOST CONFORMABLE TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

1. **T**HE Church of Rome believes, that their Church can add such authority to the Scripture, that it is only to be received by the people through the medium of their teachers, and in the sense put upon it by Popes and Councils.—The Church of England believes, that the Church derives all it's authority from Scripture, and is obliged to publish it's doctrines without addition or diminution.*

2. The Church of Rome rests many doctrines upon tradition.—The Church of England acknowledges the Scripture alone as a complete rule of faith.†

3. The Church of Rome believes, that the Pope is the first Bishop in the Christian Church;

* Gal. i. 8.

† 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

that

that he has a supremacy over all others ; the extent of this supremacy is not defined by the defenders of Popery ; several Popes have therefore established unwarrantable claims, and been obeyed by the generality of the Papists.—The Church of England believes, that all the Apostles were equal in power ; that there is no primacy in the Church of Christ, except for order and discipline ; that the Pope never enjoyed any primacy, as the Successor of St. Peter, but as the Bishop of the imperial city, during six centuries ; and that such primacy conveys no prerogative of dictating to other Bishops according to his own pleasure.^z

4. The Church of Rome claims an Infallibility. This Infallibility is by some given to a Pope and Council ; by some to the Pope alone in the exercise of his power.—The Church of England believes the Apostles to have been infallible in their doctrines, through the assistance of the spirit ; but that now, since the gospel is completed, every doctrine must derive it's authority from the scriptures alone.^a

5. The Church of Rome has imposed upon the vulgar the belief of many miracles, ill-attested, and wrought upon trifling occasions.—The Church of England believes, that God confirmed his revelations, and sometimes in

^z Mat. xxiii. 8. 2 Cor. xi. 5.

^a 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

important cases vindicated his glory by miracles ; which are now wisely withdrawn, when their necessity has ceased.

6. The Church of Rome encourages pilgrimages to particular places, and promises pardon of sins to the penitent, who visit particular Churches, or Tombs of Martyrs, according to the appointment of the Pope.—The Church of England believes, that repentance alone is necessary and sufficient ; and that pilgrimages are superstitious, as attributing too much holiness to places or relicts ; and hurtful, as taking persons from the practice of their duty to perform an useless journey.

7. The Church of Rome encourages the use of images, as lawful and expedient.—The Church of England believes it equally unlawful for Christians to bow to images in divine worship, as it was for the Jews.

8. The Church of Rome believes a transubstantiation of the elements in the sacrament ; which the council of Trent calls a change into real flesh and blood, and the Abbe Mann explains by a change into Christ's glorified body.—The Church of England believes the Lord's supper to be a memorial of his death, which is applied by faith to our grace and salvation ;
and

and that our Saviour's words, when he says, *This is my body*, are no more to be literally understood, than when he calls himself *a Way, a Door, or a Vine*. The Abbe Mann's explanation is to be rejected, not only for it's novelty, but because we have no perception by our senses, either of Christ's natural or glorified body in the sacrament.

9. The Church of Rome through several ages practised persecution for religious opinions. And though many members of that communion were of a mild, merciful, and compassionate disposition; yet the uncharitable part generally prevailed, and shed torrents of innocent blood by crusades, massacres, and judicial executions.—The zeal of the Church of England, and of other protestants, has sometimes gone to unwarrantable excesses, though not to the same degree. Yet she has on several occasions plainly shewn, that her chief ruling spirit is that of toleration.

10. The Church of Rome confines salvation within her own Pale.—The Church of England believes, that all who profess Christ are part of his Church on earth, and will be approved by him, as far as they conform to the gospel in faith and practice.

11. The Church of Rome calls upon Saints
for

for their assistance in prayer, though there is no command in the gospel for such a practice, and they are not certain that the Saints know our petitions.—The Church of England in her prayers to God depends only upon the intercession of our blessed Saviour, and the assistance of the holy Spirit.^b

12. The Church of Rome prays for the dead.—The Church of England esteems such prayers useless, as every one will be judged according to the deeds done in the body.^c

13. The Church of Rome discourages the Laity from reading the scriptures. — The Church of England thinks, that private enquiries into the meaning of the gospel promote christian knowledge, provided they be undertaken with humility and prudence.^d

14. The Church of Rome orders her public service to be celebrated in Latin, a language little understood by the generality of her members.—The Church of England thinks, that every one should pray with the understanding, as well as with the spirit; which cannot be practised in an unknown tongue.^e

15. The Church of Rome praises celibacy

^b 1 Tim. ii. 5. ^c 2 Cor. v. 10. ^d John v. 39. Acts xvii. 11.
^e 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

as more holy than matrimony, and forbids the clergy to take a wife; though marriage is numbered amongst their sacraments, and St. Peter himself was a married man. — The Church of England believes, that all Christians are at liberty to chuse either state, provided they observe the rules of chastity, according to their circumstances and inclinations.^f

16. The Church of Rome forbids marriages between distant relations without a dispensation from the Pope, and he has thence been frequently troublesome to kings, who were threatened with excommunication, if they did not divorce their lawful wives. At the same time it permits dispensations for incestuous marriages.—The Church of England forbids no marriages, which she does not believe to be forbidden in scripture; and for such she will allow no dispensation.

Though we hold the authenticity of the Christian revelation, the divinity of our Saviour, and the efficacy of his death; we are treated by the papists as heretics out of the pale of christianity, because we do not acknowledge the authority of the Church of Rome, the supremacy of the Pope, and the doctrine of transubstantiation. Let them then shew upon what

^f 1 Cor. ix. 5. Heb. xiii. 4.

foundation these tenets rest, and how far they are essential to salvation. When they boast that theirs is the Old Church, they should declare in what articles the English Catholics differ from foreigners and the mandates of ancient Popes, who are acknowledged in general to have been guilty of usurpations, though they seem very unwilling to specify particulars. The plea of the antiquity of their Church is quite insufficient; unless it's doctrines can be proved to conform to the gospel. Since error is to be forsaken, though never so ancient; and truth is to be embraced, though it has been long obscured or interrupted. We are informed, that some heresies began even in the time of the apostles. All doctrines therefore must be tried by the word of God. *For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.*²

² 2 Cor. x. 18.

T H E E N D.



